

# SAHAM TONEY PARISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



## Part Three: Key Views Assessment

January 2019



# Saham Toney

## Key views assessment

for Saham Toney Parish Council

January 2019



SAHAM TONEY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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The landscape assessment has three other parts:

Part 1: Parish Landscape character assessment

Part 2: Fringe sensitivity Assessment

Part 4: Design Guide

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**SAHAM TONEY  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This document is part of the suite of documents that evaluate landscape and visual aspects of Saham Toney for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The full suite comprises:

Part One: Parish Landscape Character Assessment;

Part Two: Fringe Sensitivity Assessment;

Part Three: Key Views (this assessment);

Part Four: Village Design Guide.

### The purpose of Key View studies

1. As part of the assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape, the understanding of which particular views local people particularly appreciate is useful.
2. This assessment seeks to provide a robust and objective evidence-base to inform and underpin a Neighbourhood Plan key view policy. As part of a detailed parish landscape assessment it will also inform the assessment of sites put forward for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. A 'key' view is one that would be generally recognised as having notable qualities or features, landmarks, or a particularly attractive composition that might cause people to pause and appreciate the scene. It is likely to feature in people's perceptions of what Saham Toney looks like in their memories.
4. The purpose of identifying key views is to identify scenes that notably contribute to character and sense of place, or local distinctiveness in order that this contribution can be conserved in the future. By analysing what makes them special, and identifying how they contribute to sense of place, a framework for their protection can be justified. It will aid policy making, relating to expansion of the village, to take account of key views when considering the impact that new development might have in any given location. It can be used to help make a judgement about how a proposed development or change in land use will alter views and, consequently, whether this change is likely to be acceptable.

### View criteria

5. There is not an accepted definition of what constitutes an important view, in any of the published and accepted landscape guidance. The selection of views is also a result of people's perceptions, so is somewhat subjective.
6. Important views are usually understood along the lines of a view that defines the special character and qualities of a settlement and contributes to its 'sense of place'. Such views could have a particularly notable or distinctive composition or scenic quality, that makes them stand out in the eyes (and memories) of local people and visitors. They might feature distinctive and/or historic buildings, local landmarks, or an appealing or historically intact arrangement of topography, natural features and built form that together help give a settlement its identity, and perhaps come with particular recognised cultural associations.
7. Given that recognised indicators of value - such as statutory landscape designations, planning policy for landscape quality, designated green spaces, rights of way, or visitor attractions drawing large numbers of people - are generally absent in Saham Toney, so the criteria focus on 'local' value.
8. The following factors are relevant:
  - Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views - including complexity, appreciation of topography, depth of field, naturalness, and arrangement of natural and vegetative features.
  - Number of people likely to be experiencing it. The more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value attributed, i.e. a view from a well-used footpath on a village edge, identified by numerous people as important, might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point on a quiet lane.
  - Presence of a landmark feature, perhaps with skyline presence, aiding orientation in the landscape or along a route.
  - View contributes to the setting of a Heritage asset.
  - Other locally distinctive points of interest or cultural associations that particularly define the character of Saham Toney. Views that are indicative of a special 'sense of place' which reflect its intrinsic character and key characteristics.

## 1.0 Introduction continued:-

9. The following final definition was agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan group:

*A Key View is a publicly accessible viewpoint that reflects the most distinct and unique characteristics of the Neighbourhood Area. It is memorable and appreciated, and evokes positive emotions. It encompasses an important feature of the village's settlement history and the way its landscape has been shaped by those who have lived and worked in it, and by nature. It may be said to be worthy of being illustrated in a photo, postcard or painting and as such would best represent a special element of the village's identity.*

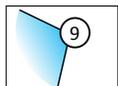
### Selection process

10. An initial selection of important views were put forward by the NP team in early 2018. The team walked and drove around the parish and identified a number of stopping points where they considered a key view was experienced. Eleven 'Communal views' around the parish were identified and these were included in a Neighbourhood Plan policy and consulted on in spring 2018 when pre-submission of the Plan was made. The community supported the presentation of the views presented.
11. The selection process had used a tickbox table of values derived from Box 5.1 of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 (LI & IEMA 2013) to justify the view selection. However the purpose of this table is more properly used to help define landscape value, rather than view-related visual qualities. The selection criteria were, therefore, adjusted for the final selection process.
12. Following review of comments from Breckland District Council on the Regulation 14 pre-submission of the Neighbourhood Plan, and review by this landscape consultant, a number of changes to the selected views were made. Breckland Council, commented that the assessment of the views selected was limited and that it was unclear why certain views had been chosen for inclusion over others. The Council considered that further evidence would be needed to justify each view, which should include a consideration of alternative views, and set out why particular view assessment criteria had been adopted. This assessment seeks to provide this information.
13. The views were tested against the criteria described above. Following consideration,
- some of the initial views were discarded and further views were suggested. A final set of ten key views were decided upon, and agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Group which are presented on the following pages. However, it should be noted that the final list is not an exhaustive list of the only views with special qualities in the parish, but a suitably limited number of views was necessary for the assessment and resultant policy to be workable.
14. Two types of view are presented. Point views are mapped at the more or less singular point at which they are experienced, but a number of linear or sequential views are noted. These recognise a view to a landmark or point of interest, but which might be available in a sequence along a section of road. These are mapped within a yellow circle on the following page.
15. Any initial views that were discarded were felt to be weak in light of the agreed definition, and perhaps lacked focus, a point of interest or variety, or sufficient qualities that combined to form a scenic view.
16. The results of the key view assessment formed part of the Fringe Sensitivity Assessment, as one of the criteria for determining the visual sensitivity of each of the land parcels assessed. For example, the sensitivity of a land parcel would be increased if all or part of it, fell within one, or more, key view.
17. The ten selected viewpoints and their mapped locations follow.

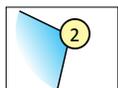
## 2.0 Location map for viewpoints

1. Saham Hall parkland
2. Richmond road, east to church
3. Hills Road - to church tower
4. Pound Hill, to Mere
5. Pound Hill, to church
6. Richmond Road, north to church
7. Broom Hall meadows
8. Cley Lane gateway
9. Ovington Road - Mill tower view
10. Threxton church view

### KEY



View is a 'point' location: blue fan represents direction and approximate field of view from mapped location.



View is sequential: Representative viewpoint for areas where views are experienced from more than a single point. Blue fan represents direction and approximate field of view from mapped location.



Landmark feature



## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 1



#### Location:

Photograph represents the views that are experienced through the parkland on the west side of Threxton Lane into the grounds around Saham Hall.

#### Justification:

The aspects of value which make these views important are related to its strong parkland character. This is an uncommon type of landscape locally and is distinctive. It has intrinsic historic value and provides setting to the classically designed Saham Hall which forms a focus to the view in the background. Impressive mature tree specimens are features of interest within the view. This landscape makes significant contribution to the character of area RCA-2 'Western estates' in the Saham Toney Landscape Character Assessment.

#### Change management objectives:

Protect this view in recognition of its special character. Conserve and manage the parkland landscape for its future sustainability including managing the stock of trees for their health and to ensure a varied age structure.



## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 2



#### Location:

Two photographs provided represent the sequence of views that are experienced along Cressingham Road/Richmond Road heading east into the village.

#### Justification:

The aspect of value which make this a key view is related to the glimpses of the church tower experienced on the approach to the village and its role as a locally important landmark, aiding in orientation and signalling the village ahead. These views are experienced by a large number of people in transit through the village.

#### Change management objectives:

Protect views of the church tower in views on the approach to Saham Toney from the west.

### 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

#### Key View 3



#### Location:

Photograph represents the sequence of views that are experienced along Hills Road, heading south towards Chequers Lane.

#### Justification:

The aspects of value which make this a key view are related to the appreciation of the subtle valley topography, glimpses of the church tower which aids orientation. Potential for Pages Place to also contribute to the view in the future, once restoration complete. This view is experienced by large number of people including residents.

#### Change management objectives:

Conserve the view to the church tower on the southern part of Hills Road. There is also scope to improve the view through removal of the telegraph poles along Hills Road through re-routing services underground.

### 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

#### Key View 4



#### Location:

Photograph represents the views that are experienced over open land to the south of Pound Hill towards the Mere and Watton beyond.

#### Justification:

The aspects of value which make this a key view are related to its rural character and pivotal position as the heart of the settlement and setting to the historic Mere. The Mere has many cultural associations such as the tales of its two species of eels. It provides a sense of the shallow valley topography and aids orientation within the landscape. Distant built form nestles with trees and the mill tower can also be glimpsed to the southeast. This view is experienced by large number of people including residents.

#### Change management objectives:

Protect the openness in this view to allow it to continue to function as the undeveloped rural heart of the village, allowing long views to the south.

There is scope to improve the view through the replacement of the dense line of conifers, to the right of the view, that back the school grounds, with native species.

### 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

#### Key View 5



#### Justification:

Photographs represents the series of views that are experienced heading south along Pound Hill towards St. George's church.

The aspect of value which make this a key view is the strong silhouette of the church tower that is the central focus of the view, framed between mature trees. This view is experienced by large number of people including residents.

Change management objectives: to conserve the view to the church tower and prevent development impinging upon it. Retain tree canopies where they frame the views.

There is also scope to improve views through the management of street furniture such as the bus shelter and signage - keep such street 'clutter' to a minimum and any replacement of furniture in the future must be low key and appropriate to the rural setting.



## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 6



#### Location:

Photograph represents the series of views that are experienced heading north along Richmond Road. This photo is taken just south of the junction with Bell Lane.

#### Justification:

The aspect of value which make this a key view are related to the strong function of the church tower sitting in the skyline, contributing attractive historic built form to the view, as well as functioning as a landmark to aid orientation in the village. These views are experienced by a large number of people both living in the village and passing through.

#### Change management objectives:

Protect views of the church and its tower from Richmond Road as it is an important landmark and skyline feature. There is also scope to improve the views where frontages are untidy or lack unity.

### 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

#### Key View 7



#### Justification:

Photograph represents the view southwest-ward at the access point into Broom Hall hotel from Richmond Road.

The aspects of value which make this a key view is the rural character of the meadows that stretch down to the river and to the west, and which have a parkland feel in the foreground. The eye is drawn to the distant wooded horizon and few modern elements can be seen, although filtered views to commercial premises in Watton can be seen in winter months. It is a scenic view and it plays a role in the sense of arrival/departure to and from the village.

Change management objectives: To protect the view and retain the undeveloped nature of the meadows. Maintain the amount of tree cover in the valley bottom which plays a key role in screening views to the edge of Watton to the south. Re-routing underground the utility lines that currently pass overhead would bring improvements to the view. Maintain the condition of the landscape through traditional grassland management for grazing or hay.

## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 8



#### Justification:

Photograph from Cley Lane on the approach to the village, heading north from the bridge. Experienced as part of the break in settlement between Watton and Mill Corner.

The aspect of value which make this a key view is the undeveloped character of its open meadowlands, attractive barns and mature trees which convey a strongly rural character with almost a parkland feel. Glimpse of a house beyond the trees in a well managed setting. It is a scenic combination of natural elements and built form, which marks the arrival into the parish. This view is experienced by large number of people.

Change management objectives: to protect this view and conserve its undeveloped character. Continue to manage the meadows for grazing, and retain and manage the mature vegetative features.

## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 9



#### Location:

Photograph represents the view towards the village edge, from Ovington Road, when heading into the village from the west.

#### Justification:

The aspect of value in the view is the glimpse of the mill tower emerging from trees to the left hand side. It is the only place in the landscape from which the tower can be directly seen. The landmark signals the approaching village edge, aiding in orientation.

#### Change management objectives:

To conserve this view of the Mill and seek opportunities to create further views to the tower from the surrounding landscape.

## 3.0 Viewpoint photographs

### Key View 10



#### Location:

Photograph represents the sequence of views that are experienced on the approach to All Saints Church, Threxton, from the far southwest of the parish.

#### Justification:

The aspect of value in the view is the isolated round-towered church, in its valley bottom setting which functions as a strong landmark and provides a sense of heritage. With the curving lane and mature oak trees it is a scenic view with strong focal point.

#### Change management objectives:

Conserve the view to the church (just outside the parish boundary) and maintain the undeveloped nature of the river meadows that provide the setting.

Improvements to the character of the view would be achieved by careful planning for the replacement or of the leylandii type conifers that enclose the water treatment plant which are overly dominant and inharmonious in this landscape.

*Parish boundary along the brook, which passes just in front of the conifers seen.*

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**Saham Toney Parish  
Council**